

RECOGNIZING THE NETDAY PROJECT

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 6, 1997

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievement of the NetDay project in its efforts to connect schools and libraries across the country to the Internet.

My 7-year-old daughter's computer skills put mine to shame, and I think that's great. We all need to commit to preparing our kids for the technological requirements of the future. It is so important that all our kids, regardless of their backgrounds and resources, are provided with the kind of computer training that will allow them to compete in today's global economy.

NetDay has emerged as a direct result of the universal access intent of the Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996 and has been made possible through the efforts of thousands of volunteers in business, education, and neighborhood communities. I urge my colleagues to join the celebration of the spirit of volunteerism that has allowed NetDay to be the huge success it is.

ENDANGERED PLANT PRESERVATION

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 6, 1997

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced a bill, H.R. 570, seeking \$1.5 million for a genetic plant conservation project that would collect and preserve genetic material from the Nation's endangered plants. A total of 513 U.S. plants are listed as endangered and 101 as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Precious species such as the eastern prairie fringed orchid in northeastern Illinois, the just-listed Stebbins' morning glory native to the central Sierra Nevada in California, and many other declining plant species have been listed under the Endangered Species Act [ESA] and recovery actions have shown success. However, a lack of sufficient resources for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [FWS] and inadequate ESA funding make it difficult to ensure that all of these species will be saved from extinction.

A crucial part of the solution to save our endangered species is this genetic plant conservation project, which will save and catalog genetic material for later propagation. As genetic technology develops, we would have saved essential materials necessary to restore plant populations, preventing extinction.

My bill requests \$1.5 million for activities such as rare plant monitoring and sampling, seed bank upgrade and curation, curation and propagation of endangered plant collections, expanded greenhouse capacity, nursery construction, cryogenic storage research and development, and in-vitro storage expansion.

In my State, this project could help combat Hawaii's endangered species crisis by collecting genetic material from native plants—275

plants native to Hawaii which are already listed under the ESA as endangered or threatened. This represents a startling 45 percent of the total number of U.S. plants listed. About 75 percent of plant and bird extinctions in the United States have been Hawaiian species, despite that fact that the Hawaiian Islands make up less than 0.2 percent of the country's total landmass.

A recent study in the journal *Science* highlighted the serious extent of Hawaii's endangered species crisis by naming Hawaii as one of four hot spots in which the Nation's endangered species are concentrated. The other hot spots are Florida, southern Appalachia, and much of southern California.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 570 and this forward-looking, necessary genetic plant conservation project, which will preserve plants that many of our ecosystems cannot afford to lose.

ROMA SPORTS CLUB MAN OF THE YEAR

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 6, 1997

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like for you to join me in honoring Charlie Stillitano, of Westfield, NJ, as the Roma Sports Club "Man of the Year." Charlie has proven to be a leader in the soccer community of New Jersey for the last two decades, eventually becoming vice-chairman of the U.S. Soccer Federation Foundation, a position which he currently holds.

Charlie's commitment to soccer began when, as an undergraduate student at Princeton University from 1977 to 1981, he was a key player on the university's soccer team, becoming an All-America and All-Ivy League defender. In 1978, Charlie was a member of the United States under-19 team, and in 1981, played professionally for the New York United Soccer Club.

Graduating from Rutgers University law school in 1987, Charlie went on to become an attorney, first with the AT&T Credit Corp., and then with the law firm of Crummy, Del Deo, Dolan, and Griffinger and Vecchione. Although a successful attorney, Charlie never gave up on his commitment to soccer, becoming, in 1994, an integral part of the World Cup being hosted by the United States at Giant Stadium. It was Charlie who, in his capacity as venue executive director for New York/New Jersey and Giant Stadium, oversaw the \$1 million project that enabled the Bermuda grass field to be grown over the stadium's astroturf.

From the World Cup, Charlie has since gone on to become vice-president and general manager of the MetroStars. Seeking to give back to the community, Charlie has in recent years become a factor in the advancement of the sport of soccer in New Jersey on all levels. From his becoming first vice-president of the New Jersey State Soccer Association to his coaching of many teams within the New Jersey State system, Charlie has proven his commitment to the sport of soccer and the community at large.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me, our colleagues, Charlie's wife Cary, their daughter Isabella, and all of the soccer players, young

and old, in New Jersey, in honoring a true pioneer in New Jersey soccer.

EQUAL STATUS FOR DS AGENTS

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 6, 1997

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to introduce today legislation in support of the agents of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security within the U.S. Department of State.

Despite performing traditional law enforcement activities and being placed in high-risk security situations on behalf of the United States at home and abroad, Diplomatic Security [DS] agents of the State Department are currently treated differently than all other Federal law enforcement agents in regard to their retirement annuity calculations. The security functions that DS agents carry out every day include protecting U.S. personnel and the security of vital U.S. information and installations both domestically and internationally. Their duties are critical to the viability of overseas operations of the United States and to the protection of thousands of U.S. citizens around the world.

Agents of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security are charged with the security of American diplomatic personnel overseas. These agents also protect Members of Congress and their staffs while on official business overseas. We have seen time and time again the threats that DS agents face protecting America's interests. In the last few years alone, Diplomatic Security agents have been placed in harm's way while on duty in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burundi, Liberia, and Haiti. These dedicated security agents deserve to be fairly compensated.

In order to rectify this inequity I have introduced this bill that will classify DS agents as equivalent in status to Federal law enforcement personnel for the purpose of retirement annuity calculations. This measure will change the amount of Federal employee deductions and matching contributions of DS agents for retirement purposes. My bill will simply bring DS agents into accord with other Federal law enforcement agents whose retirement annuities are calculated at a rate of 7½ percent payroll deduction, the current rate for all other Federal employees is 7 percent; the rate for Members of Congress is 8 percent.

Under the bill, future agents of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security would be eligible to receive the law enforcement retirement annuity calculation 6 months after the date of enactment of the legislation. Current DS agents would be required to make an election based on the calculation of the individual's annuity which is attributable to service preceding the effective date of the legislation. Consequently, current DS agents electing to be covered under the new annuity rate would have to make a special monetary contribution or have an actuarial reduction to compensate for the shortfall in employee contribution levels for service prior to the date of enactment.

U.S. AID Inspector General investigators and Capitol Police officers have both received this designation through congressional action in recent years. In recognition of the physical strain and mental stress caused by the performance of life-threatening work, designated